

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims, amended as indicated below, replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

1. (Currently Amended) A blocking apparatus for blocking or sealing off a line for transporting dust-laden gases, wherein the line has an open area along a length of the line at which the line may be blocked or sealed;

the apparatus including

~~at least one~~ a sealing element at the open area of the line;

a movable closure body which selectively bears against the ~~at least one~~ sealing element in a blocking or sealing position of the closure body[[,]];

a rotation device connected to the closure body for rotating the closure body about an axis of rotation, the rotation device extending along the rotation axis;

a flexible linkage [[to]] between the rotation device ~~mounting~~ and the closure body [[such], so constructed that the closure body can move along a direction of the axis of rotation and also can move in a direction which is perpendicular to the axis of rotation, such that the closure body slides on the sealing element whereby the position and location of the closure body may be altered at least along the direction of the axis of rotation; and

a spacer which is operable to ~~act on~~ apply a force to the closure body at least along the direction of the axis of rotation.

2. (Currently Amended) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 1, ~~further comprising~~ wherein the flexible linkage comprises:

a flexible seal connected to the rotation device ~~for rotating the closure body~~ and ~~connected to~~ the closure body, each connection being such that a connecting location between the closure body and the rotation device ~~which rotates it~~ can be sealed off by the seal, and the flexible seal is at the device for rotating the closure body.

3. (Currently Amended) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein the closure body includes a recess therein in which the rotation device ~~for rotating the closure body~~ engages, and

the seal is arranged such that the seal may prevent solid particles from being introduced into the recess in the closure body where the device for rotating the closure body engages in the recess.

4. (Currently Amended) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein the seal is shaped and positioned to at least partially ~~seals~~ seal off, in a gastight manner, a front part, facing the closure body, of the rotation device ~~for rotating the closure body~~.

5. (Currently Amended) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 2, further comprising a cavity in the rotation device ~~for rotating the closure body~~, the cavity having at least two openings, including a first opening arranged in a front part facing the closure body.

6. (Currently Amended) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein the first opening is arranged in a region of a sealed connection between the closure body and the rotation device ~~which rotates the closure body~~.

7. (Previously Presented) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 5, further including a second opening of the cavity and a closure which is operable to close off the second opening in particular in a gastight manner.

8. (Previously Presented) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the closure body is of at least partially spheroidal shape and is rotatable around the axis.

9. (Currently Amended) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising: an inlet connection piece and an outlet connection piece, arranged at respective corresponding ends of the blocking ~~valve~~ apparatus,

each connection piece having an external diameter and an internal diameter, wherein the external diameter is defined by a metallic shell and the internal diameter is defined by an inliner; and
~~an insulating material for a body of~~ thermal insulation, arranged between the inliner and the metallic shell.

10. (Previously Presented) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a connecting element between the metallic shell and the inliner for supporting the inliner on the metallic shell.

11. (Previously Presented) The blocking apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a fixing element for flexibly and resiliently mounting the sealing element.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for operating a blocking apparatus for blocking or sealing off a line ~~for transporting in which~~ dust-laden gases or gases laden with solid particles are transported, wherein the apparatus includes a movable closure body and ~~at least one~~ a sealing element against which the closure body is placed when the line is being blocked, and ~~a device for an~~ actuating device for the closure body ~~to which the closure body is connected and by means of which the closure body is actuated and is placed against the sealing element when the line is being blocked by rotation of the closure body about an axis of rotation, the method comprising:~~

moving the closure body by means of a suitable flexible linkage to the actuating device ~~for actuating the closure body~~ along the direction of the axis of rotation and also in a direction which is perpendicular to the axis, such that the closure body slides freely on the sealing element, and

altering applying an external force to alter the location and position of the closure body along the direction of the axis of rotation or in a direction which is perpendicular to the axis, during operation of the blocking apparatus.

13. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising sealing a connecting location between the closure body and the actuating device ~~for actuating the closure body~~ ~~is~~ with respect to the environment, to prevent ingress of impurities.

14. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the actuating device ~~for actuating the closure body~~ includes a cavity[[,]] which has at least two openings, including a first opening arranged in a front part facing the closure body, and wherein gas pressure is developed at the first opening for controlling a position of the actuating device ~~for actuating the closure body~~.

15. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the first opening is arranged in a region of the sealed connection between the closure body and the ~~[[a]]~~ actuating device ~~which actuates it the closure body~~.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein a second opening of the cavity is closed off in a gastight manner.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 14, further comprising filling the cavity with a medium at a higher pressure than ambient pressure surrounding the blocking apparatus.

18. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 17, further comprising holding the medium in the cavity substantially at a constant pressure level above ambient pressure surrounding the blocking apparatus.

19. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the rotation device ~~for rotating the closure body~~ comprises a shaft extending along the rotation axis.

20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sealing element comprises a seat ring at the opening and shaped for receiving and sealing to the closure body.

21. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the spacer is adjustable hydraulically to act on the closure body.

22. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the flexible seal comprises a bellows.

23. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the rotation device ~~for rotating the closure body~~ comprises a shaft extending along the axis of rotation and the shaft has an end at which the front part thereof is located.

24. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the rotation device ~~for rotating the closure body~~ comprises a shaft extending along the axis of rotation and has an opposite end at which the second opening is defined.

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the closure body includes a through flow passage.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the inliner is metallic and the insulating material is a refractory material.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the connecting element is between the metallic shell and the inliner in the region of the blocking valve.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the connecting element bears against the sealing element and at least partially supports the sealing element.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the fixing element comprises a disk spring.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the spacer is adjustable to move the closure body along its axis of rotation.